

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

GEORGE ELIOT'S ESSAYS.

ESSAYS AND LEAVES FROM A NOTE-BOOK. By GEORGE ELIOT. 12mo. pp. 265. New-York: Harper & Brothers.

This volume contains some of the earliest of George Eliot's essays in various English reviews and a few fragments from her last "Note-Book." The essays are now republished without authority. The editor makes in the Preface the reassuring statement that the author prepared before her death "a collection of such of her fugitive writings as she considered deserving of a permanent form; carefully revised them for the press; and left them in the order in which they here appear with written injunctions that no other pieces written by her, of date prior to 1857, should be republished. It is gratifying to learn that these essays are published with her sanction, and that no attempt will be made to rescue her earliest contributions to periodical literature from an oblivion in which she herself welcomed while in the possession of her mature powers. The Preface conveys no intimation that the scattered pages of the "Note-Book" are published with her approval and authority. The same "Note-book," it seems, contained some material that was used in "Theophrastus Such," and the editor considered himself at liberty to reproduce the remainder. He would have shown greater consideration for the memory and literary fame of a woman of original genius, if he had resisted the temptation to fill out the volume with these records of inchoate and desultory reflection.

The essays are seven in number. Five of them belong to the earliest period of her literary activity, having been published, four of them in the "Westminster Review" before the readers of "Blackwood's Magazine" had caught a glimpse of supreme genius in "Scenes of Clerical Life." The remaining two are a review in the "Fortnightly" of Mr. Lecky's "History of Rationalism," and an address to Working-men attributed to Felix Holt and published in "Blackwood's Magazine." Of these essays the strongest are the first and the third in the earlier group; those relating to the poet Young and Dr. Cumming. The remaining essays are either German studies or philosophical dissertations, but in these two George Eliot is on English ground and is employing her remarkable analytical powers in delineating types of clerical character which interested him but repelled her. The old-fashioned lover of good literature, who began, but could not finish, "Theophrastus Such," and who has not the remotest intention of re-reading "Daniel Deronda," will find in these two reviews traces of the same truant vigor and unfading freshness for which he is content to look at least once every year in the pages of "Janet's Repentance," "Mr. Gilfill's Love-story," or "The Sad Fortunes of Amos Barton." For example, here is a silhouette of the servile poet in orders on the verge of fifty, which bears a strong resemblance to the "Scenes of Clerical Life."

He is equally impressed with the momentousness of death and of burial fees; he lingers at once for immortal life and for "Elysium"; he has a fervent attachment to patron, in general, and to the wife of his bosom, in particular. He will teach with something more than official conviction, the nothingness of earthly things; and he will feel some thing more than private disgust at his meritorious efforts in directing man's attention to another world; and his audience will have increased tenfold. This is the moral lesson which the author reaches in a high and noble style. Next to "Mr. Isaacs" the best novel that has appeared in several years!"—[Lewesian Courier-Journal.]

non, a handsome fiend who ruled her followers with an iron hand, and murdered and drank and loved like Jezabel of old. In the stories told of Patty and her band, Mr. Townsend has found material for a novel full of striking episodes. With this material he has judiciously blended pictures of the patriarchal life of the place and period—a region haunted by the spirit of colonial caste, and a time of strange transitions.

The entailed hat, a steeple-crown of Puritan days, brings into the story a mystical influence, moulding alike the character of its wearer and the course of his life—a fancy which speaks of Hawthorne. Although in many respects Milburn, the inheritor of the hat, is skilfully drawn, some of the outlines lack clearness and make him less interesting than other characters in the book. Judge Custis, the self-indulgent, courtly, kind-hearted slaveholder, Patty Cannon, and Milburn's shrewd old negro, Samson Hat, are pictured to the life with a vigor which is unusual in the modern novel. In his relation of tragical events the author has managed to keep upon the hither side of the sensational; and he has used pathos with discreet restraint. He has introduced various realms which might have been omitted as a matter of literary taste; the story indeed would be the better for polishing, and is worthy of it. Here and there the scenes show, and that, indeed, was to be expected in the first long novel written by a hand practised only, so far as fiction goes, in short stories.

Mr. Townsend is almost the only chronicler of the Eastern Shore, a region which offers plentiful material to the romancer, as this story shows. He has used it with so much dramatic effect as to warrant the hope that this will not be his last novel.

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